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1443.



**R. FINCH**  
*et Coll. Balliolen. Oxon.*

TAYLOR INSTITUTION

BEQUEATHED  
TO THE UNIVERSITY

ROBERT FINCH, M.A.

OF BALLIOL COLLEGE.

2443





# L E T T E R S

ADDRESSED TO

Two Young Married Ladies,

ON THE MOST

INTERESTING SUBJECTS.

*" 'Twas Friendship held the pen."*

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V O L I.

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L O N D O N :  
PRINTED FOR J. DODSLEY,  
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M.DCC.LXXXII.



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## DEDICATION.

To Mrs. W—, and Mrs. M—.

My dear Friends,

THE following little work  
I beg you will accept, as  
a memorial of my tenderest re-  
gard for you, and your little  
ones;—and I must also request  
you will shelter it under your pa-  
tronage; not that I presume it

A 2 *deserves*



#### iv DEDICATION.

*deserves* your approbation, but because I am conscious it *needs* so *indulgent* a protection.

As in all probability, from my declining state of health, it will be the *last proof* of my attachment, I flatter myself you will sometimes peruse it with the candid eye of friendship, and with a tear of sympathetic pity, when the hand which wrote it is mouldering in the dust.

I am conscious the following sheets have many imperfections, and perhaps such as should only be reposed in the bosom of friendship: it would be wonderful indeed if it had not its defects,

## DEDICATION. ♥

fects, being written in a very weak state—in the course of a long and painful illness—just when barely able to hold my pen:—in such a situation, the effusions of my heart have involuntarily flowed in the ensuing letters, without *form* or *art* ; it is indeed too full to be *regular*, and too sincere to be *ceremonious*, when the subject is my beloved friends and their children. I most heartily hope, the few imperfect hints I have been able to throw together (an amusement which has *beguiled* and *sweetened* the melancholy hours of pain and solitude, in a tedious absence)

may

## vi DEDICATION.

may be as serviceable to those for whom it was intended, as the subject has been delightful to me in the study of it.

I give you this little proof of my sincere affection, *in writing*, that it may be always with you; and that you may have at all times what may be of greater service than my presence can possibly be: it is a copy of my mind in reference to both my amiable friends, and ultimately intended (with an humble hope) for the improvement of your little ones. I might add too, with equal truth, that it is a tribute of *gratitude* for the peculiar fa-

your

## DEDICATION.   vii.

vours you have conferred on me, did I not know, that your *delicacy* on the subject of your own *merits* disclaims *all praise*. I will not run into the fulsome style of panegyric on this occasion, to you, who, in conferring benefits,

“ Do good by *stealth*, and *blush* to find  
“ it *fame*,”

lest I should give pain to that *delicacy* which *shuns* the public applause ; I must therefore suppress *much* I could say on this subject.

Farewell !—As probably my declining state may not admit of a personal assurance of my affection,

viii DEDICATION.

tion, I trust you will accept this  
trifle as the last and sincerest  
proof of it;

From your most faithful,  
and obliged friend.,

Hotwells, Bristol,  
Aug.

LETTERS.

---

# LETTERS

ADDRESSED TO

Two Young Married Ladies.

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## LETTER I.

ON RELIGIOUS DUTIES.

My dear Friends,

*Hotayella.*

**T**O minds like yours, so well disposed to practise every virtue, and so firmly attached to religious principles, little on this impor-

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B

tant

tant subject may be said, but that, if it should please Heaven to visit you with misfortune, nothing can soften your sorrows like the supports of Religion. For, happy as you both now are, you cannot expect to pass through this world without cross accidents, or disappointments. Do not promise yourselves felicity without alloy, for that is impossible to be attained in this uncertain state of things. A woman's life is often a scene of constant suffering : it is the degree of sensibility which enhances the misfortune ; and it is that alone which makes the feeling heart more or less wretched.

Religion.

Religion alone can enable us to bear our sorrows with propriety, and with dignity. Many people imagine, that the duties of Religion are incompatible with our other necessary occasions, and that to be devout, they must fairly shake hands with every business and amusement whatever :—this is a very great mistake, arising either from our not *considering*, or not *understanding*, the nature of religious exercises ; the greatest part of which are such, as are to be entirely transacted in the *mind*, and can be no hindrance to our worldly employments : for what great portion of time does it require for us to revolve a few minutes

B 2                      each



each day on the abundant mercies of God ; on the innumerable blessings we enjoy ?—to consider and weigh the nature of an action when it occurs ; or to reflect with sorrow on a past error ?—We may, though surrounded with *worldly* business, surely look up to Heaven with an eye of humble hope, or joyful gratitude ; we may send our souls thither in a short but emphatic ejaculation, without any interruption to our employments ;—and yet such as these make up the chief part (our good *actions* excepted) of the Christian duty. Hard is it indeed, if we cannot devote a few minutes every day to *Him*, who

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gives us our *being* and *duration* ; or that we cannot spare so much time from our company or amusements, as to make a short review of our actions ; to confess and beg pardon for the evils we have committed ; and bless the Eternal Source of Goodness for the mercies we hourly receive, and recommend ourselves to his almighty protection. I recommend in this article, extreme *strictness* ;—be inflexible in your devotional duties ;—preserve a fixed and stated portion of time for your morning and evening meditations and devotional exercises.—Alas ! if haste calls us from our chamber, how much

more ready are we to neglect this most important office, of praise and thanksgiving to that great and glorious God who formed the earth and built the skies, than we are to finish the most trifling part of dress, or to adjust the least frivolous vain ornament to deck our persons : whereas, we should consider,—is it nothing to have past the night in safety, tranquillity, and comfort?—is it nothing to awake to a new day with enlivened spirits? to praise the *living* God, to whom we owe the continuation of our being, our senses, our animal and rational capacity?—Be punctual in the performance of this most important

portant duty of prayer and thanksgiving; which let nothing but sickness prevent. This will open an intercourse with the Supreme Being; which will be a comfort when all others fail : it will communicate an habitual chearfulness to your mind, and give a firmness and steadiness to your resolution, which will enable you to go through the various vicissitudes of each day with dignity and propriety. That admirable Spectator, 571; of Mr. Addison, this moment occurs to my mind, in which he says—" How  
 " happy is an intellectual being,  
 " who by prayer and thanksgiving  
 " opens a communication between

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“ God and his own soul ; though  
 “ the whole creation frowns upon  
 “ him, he has his support within  
 “ him, that is able to cheer his  
 “ mind, and to bear him up in  
 “ the midst of all those horrors  
 “ which encompass him. He knows  
 “ that his Almighty Helper is at  
 “ hand, and is always nearer to  
 “ him, than any thing else can be,  
 “ that is capable of annoying him.  
 “ —In the midst of sorrows, he at-  
 “ tends to that Being, who whis-  
 “ pers better things to his soul,  
 “ and who he looks upon as his  
 “ defender, his glory, and the lift-  
 “ er up of his head. In his deep-  
 “ est solitude, he knows that he  
 “ is

“ is in company with the greatest  
“ of beings.”

In the act of prayer, we may not be so presumptuous as to suppose it will be always granted to us; but we must consider it is *we* who improve *ourselves* by raising our thoughts in prayer to *God*; every act which raises us to *Him*, carries us above *ourselves*; all we ask a-right, he bestows; and we acquire *strength* in confessing our *weakness*. How glorious is that employment, in which an angel might stop his radiant course, though bent on an errand of mercy, to look down with equal wonder and delight, to see poor lost man (a frail worm) engaged

engaged in that heavenly intercourse with the Eternal Source of Being and Perfection, which is their chief glory and felicity, i. e. that of *praising God* to all eternity. For this sweet and *most* important employment, no place is improper, no hour unseasonable, no posture incommodious; this is society even in solitude:—it is a treasure of unknown value, a fund of inexhaustible delight. To a mind thus *inclined* to *God*, the trifling incidents, the vain troubles, of this uncertain world, make but little impression. How beautiful is that expression of the royal Psalmist,  
 “ When I am in heaviness, I will  
 “ think

“think upon God; when my heart  
 “is vexed, I will complain.” Or,  
 as it may be understood, “I am in  
 “affliction, but yet my heavenly  
 “Comforter is near to me, my  
 “helper is at hand.”

Ungrateful, vile, as we are, to  
 make so great a difficulty and  
 hardship of what *ought* to be our  
 most supreme delight! and yet  
 few, very few, alas! there are, but  
 what perform this sacred duty, not  
 only with the most careless indif-  
 ference, but with the utmost reluc-  
 tance.

By allotting a portion of time  
 every day to your closet, I do not  
 mean that I would have your de-  
 votions



motions *periodical only*, for I would  
 have you refer to the invisible,  
 almighty Father of Life, every ac-  
 tion of your lives : your pleasures,  
 pains, your hopes, and fears, by  
 sentiments of gratitude, resigna-  
 tion, or confidence; so that your  
 intercourse with God and your  
 souls, will not only be at stated  
 times, but *continual*. Avoid all  
 books that may shake your faith ;  
 for your religious opinions, you  
 need go no further than the pre-  
 cepts of our blessed Saviour, in  
 which we may all find a perpetual  
 source of peace and felicity ; pre-  
 cepts, which are the perfect exer-  
 cise of all those humane, divine,  
 and

and social virtues, which as rational beings, related to God, and all his rational creation, we are indispensably and everlastingly obliged to follow.

In my next letter, I will take the freedom of sending you my thoughts on the subject of Fortitude. Mean time,

Believe me

Your faithful Friend,

## L E T T E R II.

## ON FORTITUDE.

**T**HERE is no virtue I would wish my dearest friends to possess in a higher degree, than that of *Fortitude*; and than that collective, decisive spirit, which rests on itself; and which enables us to see where true happiness lies, and to pursue it with the most determined resolution.

In all things, I would have you shew a *firm steadiness* of action:

3

this.

this is not at all incompatible with the softness and gentleness of our sex: on the contrary, it gives a degree of spirit to a mild, timid nature, which has too often the appearance of insipidity; it will dignify you in the eyes of every one: whereas a giddy, wavering, dissipated manner, has always the contrary effect.

In order to obtain this great virtue of Fortitude, it will be necessary to keep our fear, anger, envy, and malice, in such due subjection, as not to let them exceed those bounds which reason, and the nature of things, prescribes them. I do not look upon *Fortitude* here in  
the

the sense in which it is often taken, as merely a kind of medium between simple fear and rashness; but I look upon it as the *rule* by which all those passions which arise from the sense of any evil or danger, ought to be guided and directed. It is by *Fortitude* we should guard and defend ourselves from all those troublesome and disquieting impressions, which outward evils and dangers are apt to make on our minds. And in this sense, Fortitude comprehends not only courage, but sufferance, contentment, and meekness, as it is opposed to its contrary vice.

Nothing

Nothing can be more pleasant, than to hear an angry passionate man pretending to this virtue; who has no more title to it than a tyger, a mastiff, or any other irascible animal; nay, even any furious beast could outvie them all in this particular: for as to that which is truly rational, and which consists in a firm composedness of mind in the midst of dangers and disasters, these *blustering* people are the most wretched veriest cowards in nature. The true *Fortitude* of mind consists in being *hardened* against evil and dangers from *rational principles*; in being so fenced and guarded with reason and con-

VOL. I. C. sideration,

sideration, that no melancholy accident from *without* can disturb us; it is, in short, having such a constant power over our wayward wills, as not to be *fearful* in danger, *impatient* in suffering, *angry* at contempt, or *revengeful* under injuries and provocations: and, till we have in some degree attained this virtue of firmness, we can never be happy here nor hereafter; for whilst we are in this world of crosses and disappointments, we must expect to be encompassed with perplexities of all kinds; but if we arm ourselves with *Fortitude*, all the accidents which befall us (as says that admirable divine and great philosopher

philosopher Dr. Scott) would be but like “ a shower of hail upon  
 “ the tiles of a music-house, which  
 “ with all its clatter and noise  
 “ disturbs not the sweet harmony  
 “ *within.*” We lay ourselves open  
 to the tempest, if we *uncover* our  
 minds to them, by being moved to  
 passion. Miserable is our condi-  
 tion, if we are utterly destitute of  
 Fortitude ; for of this we may be  
 certain, that if we do not by *fir-  
 mness* command our passions by the  
 rules of *reason*, we must necessarily  
 be subject to every little cross ac-  
 cident that is perpetually surround-  
 ing us. We are like a ship without a  
 pilot in the midst of a wide tem-



pestuous ocean, the sport of every wind and wave.

Without Fortitude we can only be blown about by every blast, “as the stubble before the wind.” Christianity strictly enjoins us to practise this necessary virtue of fortitude; which consists in the due regulation of irascible affections; such as *moderating* our anger and impatience, *suppressing* our envy, and *conquering* our hatred and revenge. St. Paul particularly says, (Coloff. i. 11) “Be *strengthened* (i. e. be armed with fortitude) “with *all might*, unto all patience “and long-suffering.”

And

And it is very observable, that all the virtues which are comprehended in this of *Fortitude*, are reckoned among the fruits of that blessed Spirit, by which we are to be guided; i. e. (see Galatians v. 22.) “ But the fruit of the Spirit is peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness:” all which are nothing but this great virtue of Fortitude, severally exerting itself upon our base affections, and directing them to those laws which *right reason* prescribes; and likewise setting such limits to them as are necessary to the peace and happiness of our

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rational natures. If you follow  
this advice, your minds will be  
elevated above the reach of injury,  
which is the most ardent wish of

Your faithful friend.

L E T-



## L E T T E R III.

## ON CHARITY.

**I**NEXPRESSIBLE is my delight, to see the *delicacy* with which, my amiable young friends, you bestow your bounty on the distressed ; you indeed rightly judge, “ that charity (if it may  
 “ be so called) often inflicts a  
 “ deeper wound by the *manner* of  
 “ its being conferred, than even  
 “ the most bitter stings of poverty.” A judicious author re-

marks, " We are not always charitable for doing charitable *actions*."

We cannot, indeed, be too quick in relieving the distressed; for what charity is it, not to relieve a soul till it has wounded it in the tenderest part?

Nothing can be more cruel, than to depend on the help of that sort of people, who relieve merely from a principle of popularity and a sordid affectation of applause.

To shift off an indigent object from day to day, is in fact only to mock their sufferings. Our assistance, in this case, often comes

too late. Our blessed Saviour says on this head: "What thou

"doest, do *quickly*."—The design of  
that

that inimitable miracle of the five loaves and two small fishes (after the feeding of five thousand people) being multiplied into seven baskets of fragments, was to teach us, “ that the distribution of our “ charity shall be rewarded with a “ double increase.” How beautiful is that elegant simile of St. Basil, in his address to the *rich* ! who compares riches to the waters of a well, which, the more they are drawn off, rise with greater clearness and in more abundance. But there is an infatuation in covetousness ; and very difficult is it to convince a rich man of the truth of this doctrine : a discourse upon

upon charity is but an indifferent entertainment to him; there is no *sense* he thinks, in parting with what he has; but alas! the fatal time, the hour is hastening, when it will be too late for him either to *believe* or to *practise* this duty. This divine virtue is attended with such peculiar beauty, that it does not only recommend us to the esteem of others, but highly entitles us to the mercy of God, who is himself *beneficence* and *love*. The whole Christian Religion is in fact an institution of *love*, viz. of the *love of God to man*, of *man to his fellow-creatures*. Our blessed Sa-  
viour

viour so strongly recommends this  
 duty, that he even looks upon all  
 offices of charity and compassion  
 to the poor as instances of kind-  
 nefs to *himself*. He even makes  
 the final sentence of the last judg-  
 ment to depend upon it. St. Mat-  
 thew xxv. 34, 35. "Come ye  
 "blessed of my Father (says our  
 "Saviour) inherit the kingdom  
 "prepared for you; for I was an-  
 "hungred, and ye gave me meat,"  
 &c. &c. And again, verse 40 of  
 that chapter, he says, "Inasmuch  
 "as ye have done it unto the  
 "least of these my brethren, ye  
 "have done it unto *me*." Many  
 eminent divines place the duty of  
 alms-



alms-giving under the head of *justice*; as they look upon it a kind of theft or robbery, to withhold from the poor such a portion of the superfluities of life to which they are justly entitled. That expression in St. Luke, where it is said to the man so superfluously rich that he knew not where to lay his goods, "Thou *fool*, this night thy soul shall be required of thee," is interpreted by St. Austin as a denunciation of eternal punishment upon the rich man, for keeping in his own hands what was unnecessary for himself, and might have been of the *greatest* advantage to others. Another great

great Father says, " 'Tis equally  
 " criminal to with-hold your  
 " superfluities from the needy, as  
 " it is to injure or defraud any  
 " man of his right." And " We  
 " unjustly detain from other men  
 " what they have a right to, when  
 " we keep to ourselves what is not  
 " *necessary* for us." I shall not  
 take upon me to say, whether, ac-  
 cording to the *strefs* and *rigour* of  
*natural right*, we ought to act in  
 this manner; there is no occasion  
 to argue upon this point, as we  
 are obliged to be charitable by  
 the principles of our religion;   
 when the case is so plain, that we  
 shall be miserable to eternity upon  
 the

the omission of this duty, it is not worth while to enquire whether we shall suffer for the breach of any *law of nature*, or for the want of *Christian compassion*.

Inexpressible must be the satisfaction of a charitable person in his last hours; those comforts which he gave to the afflicted, to the poor, and the sick, will then spring up in his own bosom:

“ Because he delivered the poor  
 “ that cried, and the fatherless,  
 “ and him that had none to help  
 “ him; because he was eyes to the  
 “ blind, and feet to the lame, and  
 “ made the widow’s heart to sing  
 “ for joy; therefore (he may add)

“ the

“ the blessing of him that was  
 “ ready to perish is *now* come  
 “ upon me.” Job xxix. 15, 16, 17.

But there are many other branches of charity besides that of alms-giving. We must be candid in judging of the actions of others. Our blessed Saviour, who was the perfect pattern of this divine virtue, lays the utmost stress on this part of our duty, as even necessary to our eternal salvation : “ Judge  
 “ not, and *ye shall not be judged.*”

Never give ear to any little blackening report, arising from that kind of suspicion which leads one to believe the *worst* of every person ; and the same principle

of charity will prevent you from *judging* any person. You know not their *motives*, therefore how can you judge of their *actions*? Ask yourselves, on this occasion, May there not be some mistake in this? may I not be mis-informed?—It is uncharitable to suspect any person from report or hearsay; for how do you know that *suspicion* is not *injustice*? If we are even deceived in our opinion, in judging *too favourably* of another's actions, it argues more an undefining integrity of *heart* than a weakness of *head*; one had better in this case *be even deceived* than censure rashly.—Uncomfortable and painful.

ful to a delicate mind must it be, in a high degree, to speak ill of any person who in the end proves to be innocent, and to have deserved our utmost esteem.

Nay, in crimes of the highest nature, we are even bid, by *Him* who never sinned, not to accuse or condemn, by that reproof, "Let him that is without sin cast the first stone," &c.

Indeed, throughout the whole New Testament we find no doctrine more inculcated than judging *charitably* of others. We should beware too of giving indiscriminately the character of another person; which is as continually as

rashly done every day : nothing so common as to pronounce a person *extremely bad* or *extremely good*, just as the present whim dictates ; as if (as a witty author remarks) *fame* and *disgrace* were entirely at our command, or that we presumptuously imagined ourselves

“ Heaven’s delegates, design’d

“ Sole arbiters of human kind.”

There is a branch of charity which appears extremely lovely in the virtuous of our sex : it is in shewing a compassionate sympathy for *unfortunate* women. You will here imagine I mean those who are rendered so, not by *their own* levity, but

but by *the villainy* of men; who, after seduction, abandon them to want. Consider, that but for particular circumstances, such as your fortune or education, you might have been rendered as unhappy. Consider these wretched women were once happy and innocent, as yourselves. Indulge a secret pleasure in relieving their miseries, and in being the *friend*, the refuge of the *unhappy*, but without the vanity of shewing it. Pity their sufferings, extenuate their failings.—*Virtue*, in judging another, is all mild, amiable, serene, charitable. There is an excellent Spectator on this subject, where, describing the

D 2

mind



mind of a *truly* virtuous woman,  
he says,

“ There dwells the *scorn* of *Vice* .  
————— “ And *Pity* too.”

When the forgiveness of injuries is added to this branch of compassion, it is even angelic. Never did a *certain* Lady of your and my acquaintance, amiable as she is in every respect, appear more highly so, than when she accidentally discovered an unhappy young woman, whom her vile husband had first seduced and then left to perish, with two young children of whom he was the father. This excellent wife relieved her  
distresses

distresses with equal compassion and delicacy, supplied her with every requisite of life, placed her in a comfortable habitation, and took the two poor infants to her house, where she fed and cloathed them with her own hands. The mild reproof she gave her husband on this occasion (if a reproof it could be called) was only this :  
 “ Why (said she, with an angel’s  
 “ sweetness) did you leave these  
 “ little innocents to perish? Did  
 “ you think I had so narrow a  
 “ heart as not to take an interest  
 “ in whatever is your’s? Be assured,  
 “ on that account these poor babes  
 “ will be ever dear to me.”

This was indeed the triumph of virtue!—the husband, abashed, felt it in its full force.

To the forgiveness of injuries we must likewise be so far from making malicious constructions on the behaviour of our neighbours, from rejoicing at their misconduct, or proclaiming their imprudence, that we must not give ourselves leave to think even ill of them, without the very clearest evidence and most undeniable proof; and then we must equally pity, and hope for their reformation.

To endeavour to assuage the sorrows of the distressed is a pleasing task, which in some degree every

every day of our lives is in our power to enjoy, either by removing their oppressions; supporting them under their calamities, or advising the ignorant.

How happy are you, my dearest friends, who are not only blest with affluence, but with sensibility to *enjoy* that blessing. 'Tis your's to wipe the silent tear from the pale cheek of poverty; to reward modest worth lost in obscurity; whilst your gentle hands relieve the fatherless and widow, your cultivated understandings can inform the ignorant, and your exalted virtue teach you to pity the misled and unhappy. To these refined de-

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lights I leave you : that long, very  
long, you may continue to enjoy  
them, is the sincere prayer of

Your most faithful friend.

LET-

## LETTER IV.

ON RESIGNATION;  
AND TRUST IN GOD.

THE tender solicitude I feel for my beloved friends, impels me to send them a few thoughts on the subject of *Resignation*, under afflictions, to the will of the Almighty; for though surrounded as you both are with every earthly blessing, yet you must not expect to be exempted from the common lot of trial, disappointment, and suffering.

suffering: as *married* women, you have not only your own afflictions to surmount, but you must soothe and allay the sorrows of your husbands. One would not, indeed, on *all* occasions, wish to be wholly insensible to disquietude; and we must certainly renounce the most refined delights of our being, if we would on all occasions wish to possess our souls in a *statal* tranquillity.

The great business is, to bring our minds to that resignation to the will of the Almighty, as to make it the *governing* principle of our whole lives, and the chief support under the various troubles of

it. But it is our *love* to God which must bring us to a free resignation of *our* will to *His* : as he is most wise and most merciful, we should of necessity conclude that his will is the *best* ; the heart must be satisfied that the calamity, whatever it be, we lament, comes from the hand of God, of whose wisdom, love, and goodness we have the greatest assurance ; and as it does not befall us without his will, we must conclude it is most fit to be borne. Heaven leads us often to happiness by means which mock all human foresight ; but which we may be convinced will terminate in our felicity, if we have patience to wait.



wait the event. As there are many confused and *ravelled* threads prepared for the loom, which afterwards form the beautiful flower and regular leaf; so is this period of our *beginning* existence also full of many complicated vicissitudes, of which we cannot see the decisive result, but which must arise from the colour of our lives; and these will end well, if we calmly wait the grand catastrophe with a resigned dependance and firm reliance on the will of God: we shall then see “the apparent expediency of  
 “those *light afflictions*, which are  
 “but for a moment, and be then  
 “convinced that they have been  
 “working

“working out for us an eternal weight of glory.” It is impossible that we should know what *are*, or are *not*, calamities; God does not estimate things as we do. It is equally impossible to suppose that the Deity, who has made so many things for our use, and to regale every sense, can neglect our concerns, or misjudge what is proper for us; we may surely (miserable worms as we are) *allow* God himself to consider what is most *proper* for *his own creatures*, and what is most suitable to our natures, and most profitable for our affairs. Man is perhaps more dear to his Maker than he is to himself: how  
know

know we but that the blessing we  
 languish for is only delayed to be  
 increased in its value? Let the  
 most unhappy of mortals only wait  
 the final *upshot* of events, he will  
 then find the gulhing tear, the  
 heaving sigh, changed into songs  
 of praise and hymns of wonder.  
 An intelligent almighty Power  
 restrains us, doubtless, from many  
 incidents, which in our present  
 blind state we *miscall* happiness,  
 for the same kind reason which we  
 restrain a simple child, in its help-  
 less infancy, from whatever is per-  
 nicious, or absolutely contrary to  
 its preservation. Our wayward de-  
 sires are often like those of a fretful  
 infant,

infant, who cries to put its hand  
in the fire.

“ But God’s restraints are merciful as  
“ just——

“ By these our selfish passions it corrects;

“ By these from wrong our weakness it  
“ protects.

“ See Furious on his keeper frown,

“ Depriv’d the precious privilege to  
“ drown;

“ Greatly he claims a right to his un-  
“ doing,

“ The *chains* that hold him, hold him  
“ from his *ruin*.”

If we take an accurate survey of  
the events of human life, we shall  
find continual cause to bless the  
kind hand of Providence, as much  
in

in his *restraints from evil*, as in the *grant* of blessings. As a motive to resignation, we should consider how often the Great Disposer of events extracts advantages even from our misfortunes. How often do affairs the most *singularly* unfortunate, through a chain of very cross accidents, terminate in the most fortunate manner that it is possible to conceive? I have always thought it a very selfish way, to console ourselves under our losses and misfortunes, by that *narrow* old maxim, “that *others* feel the same *calamity*; and that it is no more than what *our neighbours* experience; in short, that it is  
“ the

“ the fate of every mortal in this  
 “ world to experience sufferings.”

This uncomfortable reflection, I think, is so far from alleviating our sorrows, that it ought, to a benevolent mind, to make them still greater: to a mind endued with tender sensibility, there can surely be no relief or mitigation of its griefs, in reflecting that another person is as wretched as one's self.

By a perfect resignation of our will to God, we shall attain that *trust* and *confidence* in his unlimited power, and boundless mercies, which will render us not only *indifferent*, but *superior*, to the innumerable changes of this fluctuating

state. What is not a devout soul capable of atchieving, when it is animated by this divine confidence in that Being, who,

“ Boundless spirit all——

“ Adjusts, pervades, and animates the  
“ whole !”

There are moments in which the soul, on this occasion, spurns even the weakneses of its nature, and towers above them all, by her own native energy and enthusiasm of action ; which perhaps might well be adduced as one intimation, that we have a divine and immortal spark within us, the generous native of a higher region. What  
tongue

tongue or thought can reach their happiness, who living in a perfect submission to, and trust *in*, an *all-good* and *all-wise* will, are never in the least concerned or troubled what to chuse, but everlastingly follow what an infinite goodness and an infinite wisdom has chosen for them !

And what can be more fit or reasonable, than that we should make *Him* the stay of our confidence, in whom we live, and move, and have our being? whose *wisdom*, *power*, and *goodness* is so great, that he always *knows* what is best for us, and *wills* what he knows to be so, and always *does* what he



*wills.* For there are innumerable things, which in the natural series and order of causes are consequent to every event, the greatest part of which are entirely out of the sphere of our cognizance; so that it is utterly impossible for us to make an infallible judgment of the *good* or *evil* of any event that befalls us; because, though we may be certain that such an event, singly and apart by itself, may be *good* or *evil* for us, yet, for all we know, there may be such consequences inseparable to it in the chain of events, as may quite alter its nature, and render that *evil*, which considered singly may be good for us, or that *good*, which considered

considered singly may be *evil*. We wish with the most ardent impatience for such an event, and are convinced every advantage imaginable would ensue from our enjoying it; but alas! if we should gain this desirable wish, on which we have set our hearts, according to the series of things, a thousand other events in *consequence* to it must follow; and what *they* will prove we cannot be able to prognosticate, but, for what we know, the *mischiefs* of them may abundantly outweigh the *benefit* of the other. And this being so, how extremely unfit are we to make a choice for ourselves, since in most

particulars it is an equal chance whether what we chuse will prove a blessing or its contrary. *It is God alone*, who, being the supreme disposer of all things, and having the first link of every chain of causes in his own hands, must have an entire comprehension of all the intermediate ones, from the beginning to the end. His power is not only the cause of all *actual* events, but also of the possibility of *those* that shall never be actual; therefore he must needs discern the utmost issues and concomitants of every *possible*, as well as of every *future* event; and perfectly understands not only what *will* be beneficial

cial or injurious to us, but what *might* be so. It is of inestimable advantage to us, *that* we are in the hands of a Being who knows as well what events *would* be to us if they *were*, as what they *are* when they actually *do* exist.—Let us bow our heads, therefore, in adoring resignation, and rest satisfied, that *He* who marshals all the starry hosts of heaven; and so accurately ranges every the smallest blade of grass which trembles in the wind; that *He* who created the Seraphim in all his glory, and who disdained not, in his amazing scheme of existence, to rear the humble violet from its bed, or to plant the daisy

in the lowly shade ; that it is *He* who orders all the dispensations of our state, with a vigilance and tenderness nothing can excel, with a goodness which endureth for ever.

Let us repose our whole cares, therefore, our every wish, our every hope, on that *Being*, who, from the highest throne of angels to the very lowest degree of insect existence, orders every thing in “ *number, weight, and measure.*”

Virtue, despised virtue, in this bad world, gains loveliness from a lowring Providence, and treads the melancholy shades of disappointment with more than mortal charms ;—adorned with the mild  
graces

graces of humility, patience, and humble hope, her *stedfast* eye is fixed on heaven *alone*. Shake-  
spear, in his beautiful language, says,

- “ Sweet are the uses of adversity,  
“ Which, like the toad,——  
“ All bloated, foul, and spotted, .  
“ Still wears a *precious* jewel in its head.”

If afflictions tend therefore to strengthen our mind, and to teach us resignation to our God, let us welcome distress ; let us welcome disappointment and calamity. If sickness, or even a prison, be our portion, how know we but that it is the means of opening our way to the right hand of the heavenly throne?

throne? What carries a shew of negligence in the natural world, as the roving of the planetary worlds, the unfixed motion of the stars, &c. is in reality the result of the most masterly contrivance: those heavenly bodies may appear to rove, but it is by the exactest rule and nicest order: So, what wears the appearance of misfortune in the allotments appointed for us, is not the effect of blind chance, but of the most tender love and watchful care. When we are travelling a journey, and are certain in the evening to arrive at a comfortable habitation, would it not be the most ridiculous absurdity

dity to fret at every stone or pebble which annoyed us on the road? Would not rather any little rub or impediment even raise our mirth, when we are sure in a few hours we shall be safe in comfort at our destined home? It is impossible for any *dependant Being* to be happy, without an entire *trast* and *confidence* in *that God* on whom its happiness and being *depends*. When we have attained this divine duty of Resignation to the will of our Maker, we may then welcome its attendant virtue, Contentment, and with truth exclaim,

“ Hail! sweet *Content*, where joy serene  
 “ Gilds the mild soul’s *unruffled scene*.”

Contentment



Contentment seems the peculiar gift of the Almighty, for a thankful acquiescence to the will of Heaven under all its dispensations. Who that ever beheld the sufferings of our amiable friend, Mrs. X—, but must subscribe to the above truth ? her chearful ease under the most trying calamities, her absolute contentment in the midst of poverty, pain, and the brutal treatment of a vile husband, seem the immediate gift of Heaven for her support: when she lost her fortune, she was thankful she had still her children left ; and when they were carried to an early grave by the ravages of a malignant

nant fever, she blest Heaven they endured not the miseries of a long wasting disease, and derived comfort from the chearful hope, that innocence like theirs was gone to that heaven, where alone it could be safe or rewarded. When her vile husband went abroad with an abandoned woman, she took comfort to herself in the reflection, that it was possible his infamy would not be so public there as if he had remained in England with the above woman; so much did she regard *his* fame before *her own* happiness. If any thing can add to her exalted character, it is, that she thinks it her *duty* to remit  
that

that husband (whose heart she has lost) what sums she can raise from her virtuous industry, which she is thankful above all things to Heaven she is able to pursue. Thus does this admirable woman draw *content* from every incident in life, as the bee extracts sweetness from every flower. If contentment, arising from resignation to the will of God, can be practised in these great trials, how much more easy must it be in the lesser incidents of common life! These admired lines on this subject (of the first Lord Lyttelton's, I think) occur to me this moment; on carefully perusing them, you will

will perhaps like them as much as  
I do.

—“ And half the thought Content may  
“ gain,

“ Which Spleen employs to purchase  
“ pain.

“ Trace not the fair domestic plan

“ From what you *would*, but what you  
“ can;

“ Bliss ever differs in degree,

“ Thy share alone was meant for thee,

“ Admit whatever trifles come,

“ Units compose the largest sum;

“ O tell them o’er, and say how vain

“ Are those which form Ambition’s train;

“ But thou, more wise, more blest than  
“ these,

“ Shalt build up *happiness* on *ease*.”

By resignation to the Almighty, we shall not only gain *contentment*, but that *cheerfulness* also, which Mr. Addison calls “the health of the soul;” we shall lose that perpetual anxiety and solicitude which embitters our lives, and indeed which it is impossible, without a perfect confidence and trust in God, we can avoid: for we are sensible that our condition is dependant, and that it is not in our own power, either to make it what we would have it, or to secure and continue it when it is made so: we know that by a thousand chances, notwithstanding our utmost

most foresight, we may be the next moment snatched from what we possess, or what we possess may be snatched from us. We cannot *foresee* dangers ; and if we could, it is not in our power to *prevent* them. If we form our projects ever so wisely, there are infinite cross accidents which frustrate them. Let us cast then our whole concerns, our whole care on infinite *wisdom*, which knoweth all things ; on *power*, which hath no bounds ; and on *goodness*, which endureth for ever.

Nothing will conduce more to your attaining this heavenly dis-

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position of resignation to the Almighty, or be a more effectual comfort in any trying calamity, than the continually addressing the great Disposer of our fate, in these or the like acts of resignation :

“ Great God, the time is now  
 “ come when thou art pleased to  
 “ afflict me ; but at this time, and  
 “ all others, praised be thy holy  
 “ name, this is thy appointment,  
 “ and I submit. I know it is for  
 “ some wise purpose—the return  
 “ of this calamity—the manner,  
 “ the continuance of my afflictions  
 “ are all of thy permitting. Great  
 “ Source of Being, this is thy  
 “ hour,

“ hour, which thou from all eter-  
 “ nity hast ordained to be the  
 “ season of my *present* discomfort,  
 “ but the instrument of my *fu-*  
 “ *ture* happiness and glory. It is  
 “ good for me that I am in trou-  
 “ ble, that I may learn thy sta-  
 “ tutes ; for nothing is or can be  
 “ done without thy providence or  
 “ direction—without some wise  
 “ or excellent design. Welcome  
 “ then distress — welcome then  
 “ disappointment—if it teaches  
 “ me resignation to my God.”

The *resigned* mind, by its per-  
 fect dependance on God, in fact  
 makes its own heaven, and secures



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itself for ever in the undisturbed enjoyment of it.

To the contemplation of this subject I leave you. Adieu.

Ever your sincere friend.

LET-

# LETTER V.

ON THE AFFECTION DUE TO AN  
HUSBAND.

OBEDIENCE,		DELICACY,
TENDERNESS,		ACQUIESCENCE.

*Hotwells.*

WHILST I am upon this important subject of your happiness, I forget my weak condition, and my feeble heart beats with the fond hope, that you have both, my dear friends, made the most happy choice in marriage, and

F 3                      rendered

rendered yourselves worthy the attachment of husbands, who as highly *deserve* as they are *sensible* of your merit. What an unspeakable satisfaction is it to me, to see that from your excellent choice you are neither the slaves of either a fool or a tyrant's caprice ! Miserable is the fate of many worthy but indigent young women, who are forced to give their reluctant hand to a gentleman, who thinks he does them a mighty honour or favour when he asks them for a wife. From your ample fortunes in a single state, you could have no temptations to do that from necessity, namely, to marry where your hearts

hearts were not engaged, as the above-mentioned unhappy young persons are often obliged to do. But, good and worthy as your husbands are, do not promise yourselves felicity without alloy; for that is impossible to be attained in this state of things. Constantly consider, that the persons with whom you are to spend your days are, *as men*, subject to every caprice and frailty: pass over therefore every little foible in their temper and behaviour that may be disagreeable; look upon it as inseparable from human frailty. I imagine the married state to be the happiest; but yet you must not hope for

perfect felicity:—in this world it is absolutely impossible ; there can be no marriage without contradiction or disappointment. It is true, that prudence and virtue can never fail to procure *esteem* ; but, unfortunately, *esteem alone* will not make a marriage happy. Passion must also be kept alive, which, alas ! the constant presence of the object we love is too apt to make sink into indifference. Our sex is, and ever will be, exposed to suffer, because we are always in a state of dependence. Men are naturally tyrannical ; they will themselves have pleasure and liberty, and yet always expect we should renounce both :

I am

I am not going to enquire, whether this *right* they assume is well founded or not ; it is sufficient to say it is *so*.

A married woman should continually reflect, that her *happiness*, as well as her *power*, has no other foundation but in her husband's esteem and love : so that her whole aim and study must be to preserve both. You must command *your own* temper, whilst you carefully examine *his* ;—you must share and soothe all his afflictions ;—enjoy his satisfactions :—your tenderness must relieve his cares ;—your affection soften his distress ;—your good-humour lessen and subdue his anxiety ;

anxiety ; and, above all, you must with the utmost diligence conceal his infirmities. But the important, the grand care of your life must be to *preserve* his affection ; to this great end you must direct your constant aim ; it is this which *makes* your happiness, and which raises you to fame and glory. Many women imagine, when they are married, all care to *please* is over —no farther *solicitude* is necessary ; but alas ! the prize for happiness must yet be *won*. You must endeavour to preserve the *lover* in the *husband* : to this end, every *grace* must be put in practice to *please*, every *virtue* must be called forth  
to

to *adorn* ; for you will remember, it is much more difficult to *preserve* than to *attract* love.

It is a certain truth, that men in general are less tender and delicate than women in affection ; and that if a heart is once alienated, it never can be brought back by complaints or reproaches : patience, joined with softness, in so dreadful a circumstance, may do much. But happily you are both united to men, who I am convinced will *never* give you occasion to try the melancholy expedient ; but, on the contrary, will treat you with tenderness as friends, and with delicacy as women : they will pity your  
little



little foibles, as the weakness of human nature, pass over them with good-nature, and pardon them with indulgence. Happy is it for my dear young friends, that in their marriages they did not give way, as many young women do, to a sudden fall of passion, and *dignify* it with the name of love. The delicacy of your own minds must convince you, that genuine love is founded on honourable views, on a similarity of tastes, and a sympathy of souls. You have both too much understanding to go to the extent of your power, by that most foolish expedient of what is called *trying* a husband's temper.

temper. Remember, that whatever misfortunes may happen, they are chiefly to be placed, *not* to *matrimony*, but to the common infirmities and accidents of human life. Whatever little defects you may observe in your husband's temper (for there is no human being without some) carefully endeavour to conceal them from the eyes of others: instead of exposing them, which is too frequently the case, make even those very defects the means of your shining more conspicuously. No woman can be exalted by the degradation of her husband; and, as an elegant author remarks, " a woman can never

" ver

“ ver shine with greater lustre than  
 “ when she is employed in shew-  
 “ ing the qualities of a husband  
 “ in the most respectable light.”

You are happy, my friends, in being united to men of sense, and for whom you have no cause to blush, as many women must, whenever their husbands open their lips in company ; — one should extremely pity a wife in such circumstances, if it did not occur, that she *wilfully*, with *her eyes open*, united herself to a *fool* for life.

Never dispute with your husbands, be the cause what it will ; dreadful have been the consequences

quences of those debates, which in the beginning arose from *little bickerings*, and what many women call shewing a *proper spirit*.

Never *argue* or contend with your husband in a contrary opinion; not even though you know you are in the *right*: rather deny yourself the trifling satisfaction of having your own will in an argument, than run the risk of a quarrel, which may be attended with very disagreeable consequences. A bitter expression, in these matrimonial debates, often sinks deeper than is imagined, and is often remembered and repeated when  
even

even the quarrel which gave rise to it is forgot.

You have not, I dare say, forgot the foolish Mrs. N ———, who always valued herself on what she called having the *last word*.

On the contrary, if you meet with contradiction, smooch your brow, compose your temper, and try to overcome it by chearfulness and good-humour.

If a woman knew what trifles, in the compliance of her temper, might often soothe a husband into tenderness, we should wonder to what a childish obstinacy so many women owe their uneasiness in the married state.

Never

Never discover to your husband the full extent of your love. Mons. St. Evremond says prettily; that we should “*grant*, but never “*give* our favours.” Whether the opinion of a man may be depended on, who was so well acquainted with the *human* heart, I will not pretend to determine; but certainly *marrying* a man sufficiently shews our preference, which is all he is entitled to know; and if he has delicacy, he can ask for no stronger proof of our affection. It is an undoubted truth, that violent love cannot long subsist on *both sides*; marriage, indeed, must

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inevitably break the charm that is raised by external beauty *only*; but the nameless delicacies and reserve, which always left the *lover* something further to wish, may, and ought always to remain, and the endearments that follow will, to a heart of sensibility, affect it more tenderly than even the passion itself. From the fullness of my heart I perceive I am exceeding the limits of a letter.— but I grow faint, and must lay aside my pen.

You will indulge me, I know, in the pleasing task I have undertaken, of sending you my thoughts, as they occur, on the delightful subject

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subject of your happiness ; a subject which, to the last moment of my life, will be nearest the heart of

Your unalterable friend.

G 2

LET



L E T T E R VI.

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THOSE  
ACCOMPLISHMENTS MOST AGREE-  
ABLE TO THE HUSBAND ; AND ON  
RETIREMENT, DISSIPATION, &c.

AS the grand affair of your lives,  
my amiable friends, must be  
to *preserve* the esteem of your hus-  
bands, your good understandings  
will lead you to form your taste  
exactly to his own. Dean Swift, I  
think (in his letter to a young lady  
on her marriage) has these words :  
“ You

“ You must endeavour to attain  
 “ to some degree of those accom-  
 “ plishments which your husband  
 “ most values in other people, and  
 “ for which he is most valued  
 “ himself.”—“ The endowments  
 “ of your mind will make your  
 “ person more agreeable to him ;  
 “ and when you are without a  
 “ third person, your time will not  
 “ lay heavy on your hands for  
 “ want of conversation.”—This  
 author, who is generally esteemed  
 to have as great a knowledge of  
 human nature as ever man had,  
 you see, lays the utmost *stress* on  
 the *mind* of the woman, towards  
 rendering the married state happy.

A wife may indeed absolutely depend on this truth—that the charms of *person*, however powerful they are to *attract*, are not powerful enough to *retain* a husband for any long time. The constant habitude of seeing a pretty face, soon weakens the impression it had once made ; disgust soon succeeds ; and that very disgust (caused by a *scarcity* of ideas in the wife) is often the cause of that inconstancy, of which the men are so often and so justly accused. It is from sense, from knowledge, *alone*, that you can recommend yourselves to your husband's esteem. Dreadful is it indeed, and yet nothing is more common,

common, than to hear a man exclaim to his wife, with the utmost peevishness, "How should you know this? an *ignorant woman* as you are!"—An *husband* soon grows weary of acting the *lover*, and expects in the woman he has married a reasonable creature, and a friend for life; who must consider she is not to be set up for a picture, or as a piece of *still-life*, merely to be gazed at.

In fact, nothing but a well-informed mind, and a stability of *principle*, can insure lasting happiness in this state:—the men in this particular are not such *fools* as many women may think them:—

It is true, they like to hear us sing— they like to hear us play to amuse an idle hour ; but alas ! the *ornamental* parts of our education, like the beauties of our persons, very greatly lessen in their esteem after a short time, and nothing maintains its *ground* but *sterling* good sense and real *virtue*. Let our sex be undeceived, and ashamed of themselves, if they think otherwise. If a child takes a rattle for the amusement of an idle hour, he naturally throws it aside when the novelty ceases ; in the same manner a man behaves, who marries for the transient charm of a pretty face. A woman who has only beauty to re-commend

commend her to, or to retain her husband's affection, on soon seeing its decrease, is apt to ask herself, "What is become of all that tenderness, that admiration, with which I was even idolized by this husband?—Is it all gone?"—The question is too obvious to admit an answer. Nothing can be more melancholy than the idea of such a marriage. It is a very fatal but common error, to mistake the *violence* of love for its *duration*. It may appear as a paradox, but upon the whole, perhaps, it may be found, that those marriages are, for the most part, best calculated for felicity, which had least of that *violent*

vent passion at their commencement: we have all seen numbers of people venturing even their necks to come together, who, not a month after their union, would venture their necks to be released from it, with the same degree of alacrity.

But though it is from *sense*, and a cultivated understanding, alone, that we may have the *greatest chance* of being happy in the married state; yet still a woman of sense must be very cautious how she displays it: men in general look upon one of our sex, that possesses an uncommon degree of understanding, with a *jealous eye*, and  
not

not unfrequently with a malignant one; whether it be that they chuse to engross the whole province of *learning* to themselves, I will not pretend to determine.

A wife must endeavour to heighten the charms of a *mistress*, by the good sense and solidity of a friend. If she reads a new work, a poem, or a play, it must be to form her taste, that she may be able to entertain the man she loves.

You, my dearest friends, are both happy, in being united to men of both sense and sentiment; but had the contrary been your unhappy fate, as is the case with many amiable wretched women,  
you



you must still have given your husband the *credit* (however weak in reality he might be) of managing in the appearance of the world, and in all things have given him the superiority, making him appear to the best advantage, whatever bitter sighs his weakness or folly might cause you in secret. Never did our charming friend, Mrs. C——, appear in so exalted a light, as when she is giving the merit of her own excellent management to that simple fool her husband, and rendering *him* all the credit of her *own* admirable œconomy, and other virtues. One may *indeed* say, that she seems as industriously

dustriously to conceal his infirmities, and to make his very defects appear in the most amiable light, as many other women do to make their husbands infamous or ridiculous. The folly, the weakness of the husband of the above excellent woman is *her shining-time*.

A married woman must consider what are the chief requisites to happiness; and, as it is absolutely impossible to have *every* perfection in one man, she must come to a steady determination what she is to look upon as most essential, and what is most easy to be sacrificed.

She will soon find, that a great article in the happiness of life, is  
the

the economy of her family, which must be her province of shining. This will constantly furnish a variety of subjects, which will afford a perpetual fund of amusement, which women who are always gadding abroad are entire strangers to: One of the greatest beauties in the female character is that *retiring* delicacy, that modest reserve, which avoids the public eye. Some poet (I forget whom) says,

“ Man may for wealth or glory roam,

“ But *woman* must be blest at home;

“ To this should all her studies tend,

“ This her great object and her end.”

A fashionable Lady may perhaps say on this occasion, “ Good hea-

“ vens!

“ vens ! what then to be married  
 “ is to be buried alive ! Must a  
 “ wife, to be happy, shut herself  
 “ up from all the world ?”

Not in the least ; it is only  
 meant to prove, that a life of  
*racketing* and *dissipation* is perfectly  
 inconsistent with that uniform plan  
 of conduct, which is the very  
 foundation of happiness in the  
 married state. A very judicious  
 and celebrated author says, with  
 great truth, on this head, that  
 “ Nature is so weak, and so given  
 “ to *change*, that it is difficult to  
 “ support the best-founded con-  
 “ stancy in the married state,  
 “ amidst those variety of dissipa-  
 “ tions.

“ tions that our ridiculous customs have rendered inevitable.”

It may seem hard for an husband to deny his wife the pleasure of appearing every day in public, and he might be thought no better than a downright brute, to shew his dislike of that everlasting dissipation now in vogue, that endless round of balls, plays, and other public amusements, where she listens to the idle flattery of a thousand fops. It is impossible that an husband of any delicacy can preserve his esteem for a *woman* so *public*; at least she must lose much of her merit. There cannot indeed be a more imprudent  
object,

object, than a *gay* wife, who is perpetually running from one public place to another ; but more odious still is her character, when she perhaps leaves a family of children at home, to the mercy of a set of mercenary servants, whose manners are as gross as their conversation. It is impossible but that a husband must be disgusted with the folly and idle behaviour of such a wife, and she may thank *herself* alone, for all the *consequences* that may naturally arise from it. It is indeed a most certain fact, that every wife who is determined to find her happiness in the love and esteem of her husband alone,

must give up the very blameable and extravagant fondness for being the admiration of the public. But I forget I am writing to two young women, who have too much delicacy and understanding ever to run into the above errors; and who, though in the midst of youth, genteel life, and affluence, can *smile* at that *simple thing*, the world; whilst you possess all that real elegant *reserve* of conduct which Milton makes the characteristic of woman; which he calls,

“ — Not *obvious*, not *obtrusive*,

“ ——— but *retir'd*.”

Adieu, my friends; I leave you  
to the calm delights of rural quiet,  
friendship,



friendship, books, and virtue ; and  
may you long enjoy, in your ele-  
gant retirement,

“ That sweet peace ———

“ Which *Goodness* bosoms ever • !”

Believe me,

very sincerely your's.

• Milton.



## LETTER VII.

ON OECONOMY—DOMESTIC AMUSEMENTS, MUSIC, &c.—PUBLIC DIVERSIONS, CARDS, AND DRESS—COMPLACENCY, PATIENCE—SECRETS—SERVANTS, &c.

WITH great pleasure I see my dear friends practising the most exact œconomy, as the effect of prudence, and without seeming so otherwise than by its good effects. The most trivial cares of your families will appear not only useful, but

but will be attended with sentiments of delight, when you reflect you are managing, to the greatest advantage, the fortune of the man you love ; and that by an hundred little *assiduities* you are rendering his home easy and agreeable. Your prudence, with regard to the management of your family, must wear the appearance of care and anxious tenderness for your husband : every domestic duty must be employed for his welfare ; every possible attention shewed to render the most minute circumstance pleasing. Make it even your pride to descend to the most common offices of life to

oblige him. Let the *graces* of the *mistress* charm him in the tender *cares* of the *wife*.

Lady Wortley Montague says prettily on this subject ; “ a well-  
 “ regulated marriage is not like  
 “ those of ambition or interest ;  
 “ it is *two* lovers, who live toge-  
 “ ther. A passion thus happy and  
 “ contented, softens every move-  
 “ ment of the soul, and gilds  
 “ every object that we look on.  
 “ To furnish a room is no longer  
 “ furnishing a *room*, it is orna-  
 “ menting the place where you  
 “ expect your lover : to order a  
 “ dinner is no longer simply giv-  
 “ ing orders to a cook, it is amu-  
 “ sing

“sing yourself with regaling him  
 “you love. These necessary occu-  
 “pations, regarded in this light,  
 “are infinitely more lively and  
 “sensible than cards and public  
 “places, which make the happi-  
 “ness of the multitude, incapable  
 “of pleasure.”—The above elo-  
 gant authoress above all things  
 recommends the wife to *obey agree-  
 ably*; a science very difficult, and  
 of consequence of great merit, to  
 a man capable of feeling.

It is impossible a woman can  
 too much study the *taste* of her  
 husband; and she must likewise  
 endeavour to excel in those amuse-  
 ments which he most approves.

Set yourselves to consider this great point. Be it books, music, &c. remember there is no little accomplishment, however *trifling*, but it becomes *important* when it conduces to the amusement of your husband. Never did our charming friend Mrs. P—— appear in so amiable a light, as when, having entertained her company with one of the finest Italian songs ever composed, she declared she had taken no small pains in the acquisition of it, “because” (said she with a smile) “it is *my husband’s favourite*.” He gave her a most affectionate look of inexpressible tenderness. Of all the  
movements

movements of a generous soul, those secret emanations of kindness are the greatest and most affecting, which the obliger does not put on the score of gratitude. Married persons do not in general consider enough these little delicate attentions. As the most exquisite performance in music (to draw a simile from my favourite science) derives its greatest beauty from those inexpressibly delicate touches of harmony, and secret combinations of taste, joined with execution, which are only to be *felt*, but not described; so does this obliging elegance of behaviour polish every other quality, and

and diffuse an ineffable grace over every look and action; it is, in short, the perfection of *taste* in life and manners; it is virtue, and every excellence in its most graceful form. It is of the utmost consequence to have your amusements at home, and within yourselves.

It is imagined (I know not why) that when a woman is married, she is to banish every agreeable accomplishment, and that nothing but the most sad and melancholy duties are to take place. I have always observed (nay it is proverbial) that, for instance, *music* and *singing*, after marriage, are soon neglected

neglected and laid aside; even where  
 the lady has particularly excelled  
 in those charming accomplish-  
 ments. But I would ask, Is this  
 politic? Can we be astonished,  
 that when a man sees nothing but  
 a kind of melancholy solemnity  
 reign in his *home*, that he should  
 seek diversions abroad? or that  
 the *generality* of men should not  
 be inclined to embrace a state  
 which they think so disagreeable?  
 How often do we hear a young  
 married woman, when asked to  
 sing or play, exclaim, "Sing! no  
 "—my *singing* days are *now* over:  
 "I am now *married*:—a wife  
 "has something else to do  
 "than



“ than to mind *such* trifles !” By the way, this is no great compliment to the husband : in fact, he sees that the everlasting *excuse* of the *management* of family affairs is merely a pretence for no longer endeavouring to render herself amiable. No doubt but the œconomy and most exact management of the family, with every domestic duty, as Milton expresses it, is “ woman’s *best praise*.” Yet I am inclined to believe every wife will, in a *short time*, after marriage, find it *very* incumbent to render herself agreeable to her *husband*, as well as *useful* to the family. Can one imagine that an amiable young woman,

woman, possessed of fine talents in the above accomplishments of singing and playing, if she continued after marriage to cultivate them for the amusement of her husband (supposing he had any taste for such amusements) would not greatly add to the happiness of his life, and prevent him, after his mind is fatigued with studies, or with the business of his profession, from going *abroad* to seek recreation? Sorry am I to say, I have known some married ladies so blameable in this particular, that when an husband has desired his wife to entertain him with his favourite concerto on the harpsicord, she  
has

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has *gravely*, if not peevishly, replied, " Good God ! how can you  
 " ask me, when I am so *busy* ? I  
 " am going to give orders to the  
 " cook—in short, I have a *hundred*  
 " things of *consequence* to do."  
 Such an answer, to an indulgent husband, sinks *deeper* into his mind (trifling as his request was) than may be imagined : " ten to one," (as Shakespear says) but he may justly think no *business* should be half so incumbent to a good wife as to *please* her husband. I once heard a lady, who was in the midst of a charming song, abruptly stop—I asked her the reason—" only  
 " my husband." He enters — and  
 smiling

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smiling asked — “ Was you not  
“ singing?—pray go on ”—“ No,  
“ indeed—I have got a vile cold,  
“ and am hoarse—in short, my  
“ singing days are over.”—In vain  
does he importune for his *old fa-*  
*vourite* song;—but he is cut short  
with — “ Don’t tease me — how  
“ should an old married woman  
“ sing?—besides, you see I am just  
“ going to make *tea*.”—Can one  
wonder a man should be soon  
weary of home after such *un*-ami-  
able behaviour? or rather, should  
one not more wonder, if the hus-  
band of *such* a wife should not seek  
his amusements abroad?—How  
different is the behaviour of the

amiable Mrs. X—— in this particular, a young married woman in the country, from whom I lately saw a letter which ran thus : “ You  
 “ must not be displeased that I  
 “ have not yet answered your last  
 “ letter :—in good truth, I find full  
 “ employment: my evenings are  
 “ devoted to the harpsicord ; as  
 “ the best of men (my dear husband)  
 “ is pleased to hear me with  
 “ attention, his approbation is  
 “ sufficient to excite in me a desire  
 “ to excel.—He has just been  
 “ making some *verses* on—what  
 “ would you think ?—his wife—  
 “ which I have been eagerly employed  
 “ in setting to music.—  
 “ My

“ My mornings too are engaged,  
 “ as my husband has lately be-  
 “ come a florist: Can you then  
 “ wonder that I am grown fond  
 “ of cultivating flowers? I spend  
 “ hours in the garden in their ma-  
 “ nagement, in order to surprise  
 “ him with the first auricula or  
 “ carnation. You know our house  
 “ stands in a situation perfectly  
 “ romantic; the above amiable  
 “ man has been taking different  
 “ views of it, in which I have as-  
 “ sisted, as he has taught, or ra-  
 “ ther perfected me in the art of  
 “ drawing:— he has furnished his  
 “ study with my performances of  
 “ this kind.—You see I can have

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I

“ but

“ but few spare moments;—not  
 “ to mention the cares of domes-  
 “ tic economy and family af-  
 “ fairs; but these are only *secon-*  
 “ *dary* considerations, when the  
 “ above beloved man is the first  
 “ subject of my amusement.”

What must be the feelings of an  
 husband of any sensibility, who  
 should accidentally get a sight of  
*such* a letter from his wife! I am  
 inclined to think the tenderness  
 and obedience it exhibits in every  
 line, would sink deep in his heart;  
 I defy him not to love such a *com-*  
*panion*, such a *wife*, such a *friend*.  
 It is certainly in the power of  
 every woman (who is not tied to  
 an

an absolute brute) to endeavour to act with equal *tenderness* and *obedience* as the above amiable woman; two virtues in the married state of infinitely more consequence than is imagined. What can be more delightful, than to see a happy pair thus united! where, as Thomson says,

“ *Each is to each a dearer self.*”

And, as the same poet says,

“ What is the world to them !

“ *Its pomp, its pleasures, or its forms !*”

Certain it is, that the most winning accomplishments are necessary to *preserve* the *lover* in the *husband*. A certain French



author says, “ that a young wo-  
 “ man should cultivate her talents,  
 “ in order to please her future  
 “ husband, with as much care and  
 “ assiduity as a young Circassian  
 “ cultivates her’s to fit her for the  
 “ harem of an eastern Bashaw :”  
 but this is saying *too* much—and  
 putting a woman entirely on the  
 footing of a doll or *plaything*.  
 Heaven be praised, we live in a coun-  
 try in which the *mind* of a woman is  
 thought more worthy cultivation  
 than the mere graces of *person*.

Miserable is the life of a  
 married pair, who are fain to  
 spend their evenings separately  
 abroad in search of amusements.—

*I must*

*I must again repeat: Swift, that great master of human nature, says, a wife should “endeavour to attain some degree of those accomplishments which her husband most values in other people, and for which he is most valued himself. — Such accomplishments must produce in the husband a true and rational esteem for his partner of life, which old-age will not diminish.”—And they are absolutely necessary to be cultivated, as the most happy marriages, after a time, are not always exempt from some degree of weariness, even where there is no absolute disgust; and many married*

I 3

people,

people, equally worthy and virtuous, are not secure from some cessation of tenderness, merely for want of amusements at home, and from being perpetually together. The more affluent their circumstances are, they are the more liable to this misfortune; whereas the poor, whose necessary business divides them all day, and whose *sensibility* is *blunted* by their coarse education, are in no danger of being weary of each other; and it is a certain fact, that the poor in general (except naturally profligate) are the most happy in marriage.

A wife should consider, that her character is so intimately blended

blended with that of her husband's, that *one* cannot suffer without the *other* : she must, in short, be *uniformly good* ; for if she fails in *one* point, she is (as in the affair of religion) *guilty of the whole* : for instance, if a wife is even obedience and submission itself to her husband's will, and at the same time careless of his fortune, and extravagant in her œconomy, she has no more merit in being called a *good* wife.

The indifference my amiable young friends shew for public places in general, renders my saying much on that head unnecessary. I know they both prefer

a sweet evening's ramble in the country, in their own agreeable retreats,

“ Where roses couch,—

“ And woodbines form a shade;”

and where they can

“ Woe-lone quiet

“ —in her silent walks”——

to all the tumultuous noise and disagreeable heat of a crowded assembly. Many ladies of fashion in the country imagine, that depriving themselves of appearing constantly at all the public places near them, will cut off their being acquainted with the neighbouring families: but surely balls and

and card assemblies are not the places to make friends;—the conversation there is of the most trifling kind—a few compliments of course—with a few observations on each other's dress, and who dance together, &c. is the chief part of the evening's entertainment:—it is not in *mixt* companies where the mind is best discovered.

There is a sort of unmeaning gallantry often addressed to agreeable married women at public places, by gentlemen who attend them there, and say a multitude of fine things, merely to have the vanity of being seen with such or such a lady; but you, with your usual

usual discernment, will find them equally harmless and ridiculous: the conversation of such men is only mere words of course, and exactly the same to every agreeable woman they meet with. These gallant men talk of love, as women do of fans and gloves and ribands:—they assume in their manner a great familiarity; but a proper dignity in the behaviour of the lady will soon check their assiduities. There are women foolish enough to imagine these complaisant men *in love*; but nothing can expose her more to ridicule; for a man may esteem a woman as an agreeable companion, without having

ing the least designs upon her person. To any worthy man, who may have before marriage loved you unsuccessfully, there is certainly both gratitude and humanity to be shewn; but the delicacy of your own minds will best suggest to you how to behave with propriety.

Melancholy is the reflection, that many women are fond of the vainest flattery from the other sex, though it be even from a man they totally despise:—that false unhappy sentiment, “that a woman may permit *all innocent* favours,” is as dangerous as indelicate: such a lady may *boast* of her *fidelity* and



*virtue*;—but when she dresses merely for the public, and suffers her hands to be the prey of whoever will take them; her eyes and conversation directed to every fop who addresses her with the most common-place flattery; what can she pretend of *delicate* affection to reserve for her husband? It is impossible a man of sense, or of the least refinement, can esteem a creature so public. — Well says Dr. Young,

“ There is no woman, where there’s no  
“ *reserve.*”

A married lady who dresses for the public, cannot wonder if coldness

ness and contempt from her husband follow very fast ; and that the smallest *faults*, on both sides, are as much magnified as their *perfections* were *before* marriage.

The disapprobation you express for cards, gives me the most promising hopes that you will not, on any account, fall into that fashionable dissipation. “ *A youth of folly,*” I am convinced, you have hitherto, and *will* avoid, as well as what Mr. Pope adds in the same line, “ *An old-age of cards.*”

One would think this pernicious and senseless amusement was calculated only to interrupt conversation,

lation, and to put men of sense and coxcombs on the same level. There is no stronger instance of the tyranny of avarice over the human mind, than this passion for cards ; which seems so prevalent as to have destroyed every other. One sees the most tender, the strongest connexions of love and friendship, yield to this amazing infatuation ! How common is it to see two people, who have the greatest esteem for each other, no sooner sit down to this important decision of their fate, but they labour for each other's ruin, with all the eagerness and assiduity of the most inveterate hatred and implacable revenge !

revenge ! This thirst of gain (for it is no other) is not confined to the needy and necessitous ; for one sees the *rich* are in general most infatuated with this passion ; and, though they cannot enjoy even what they have, yet often give themselves up to despair, from a desire, equally blameable and ridiculous, to have *more*.

An ingenious author of a late work \* remarks, that “ if the insatiable passion for gaming continues, it were as well that our public schools and universities were prohibited ; and other seminaries instituted for the in-

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struction

“ instruction of our children, where  
 “ they might be taught quadrille,  
 “ whist, &c.: by this method  
 “ our *girls* would be trained up  
 “ to make a figure in the world,  
 “ and the parents of *sons* saved the  
 “ trouble and great expence of a  
 “ boy’s education.”

As to dress, you will continue,  
 I doubt not, to be exquisitely de-  
 licate in that article; and I know  
 you will always prefer an elegant  
 simplicity, which will best shew  
 your taste and delicacy, to a load  
 of finery and tawdry ornaments:  
 as Swift says, “ I know you are  
 “ both utter contemners of that  
 “ kind of distinction which a finer  
 “ petticoat

“ petticoat can give you; because,  
 “ it can neither make you richer,  
 “ handsomer, younger, better-na-  
 “ tured, more wise or virtuous,  
 “ than if it hung upon a *peg*.”

Many women little imagine how  
 much dress is expressive of their  
 characters ; vanity, levity, fluttish-  
 ness, often appear through it. An  
 old Spanish proverb says, “ Tell  
 “ me what books a man reads,  
 “ and what company he keeps,  
 “ and I will tell you what manner  
 “ of man he is :” but I think we  
 may with greater propriety say, Tell  
 me how such an one *dresses*, and I  
 will tell you what sort of man he  
 is. It would be a more certain way

to discover the secret bias of each person; it is a kind of *index* to the mind. Upon the stage you see the most exact and strictest attention is paid to what they call *dressing* their *characters*. The fop has his *solitaire*—the Quaker her pinched cap and little black hood—the courtesan is decked with every tawdry ornament to allure. The most perfect elegance of dress appears always most easy, and the least studied. I need not remind you to accustom yourselves to an habitual neatness; and I know you will always remember, that even your most careless undress be such, that you need not be ashamed of

appearing before ~~any~~ company. The finest woman in the world shews her beauty ~~not~~ by endeavouring to conceal it.

Be particularly careful to receive your husband's friends with cheerfulness, and exert every little assiduity to oblige them. Entertain them with your choicest music; chuse for their amusement the most agreeable subjects of conversation, and study in what manner you can oblige them most. Dress your virtue in smiles, and remember that cheerfulness is the natural garb of innocence.

How different was the behaviour of the simple Mrs. L——, who,

K 2

whenever



whenever her husband unexpectedly brought home a friend to dinner, received him with the face of a *fury*, instead of smiles of welcome and complacency. You know how soon she lost her husband's esteem; and it would have been more wonderful, if, with a behaviour so disobliging, she could have preserved it.

The affection you bear your husbands, will induce you to shew a particular satisfaction when their engagements admit their being much at home; but never shew the least discontent at their going abroad, or peevishness at an absence longer than you might expect.

Men

Men naturally love pleasure and liberty ; and the idea that they are *limited* in either, they will neither *bear* nor *forgive*. If a woman is so unhappy as to be left for a considerable time by a libertine husband, she would do wisely to harbour no sentiments of resentment. She should remember, the faults, the follies of her husband, is her *shining time* ; *then* she must exert her virtues—*then* must her *patience*, her *mildness*, her *resignation*, appear in their most conspicuous lights. To overcome evil with good is a triumph worthy of an angel.

The exemplary behaviour of lady S—, in this respect, can never be

too much applauded. When her profligate husband returned from a journey to France, where he had been long with an abandoned woman, Lady S— received him without reproof, or even complaint. “Come, my love (said she): let me  
 “lead you to the nursery, to your  
 “little ones: during your absence  
 “I have been teaching our little  
 “Billy to lip your name; and  
 “your darling Fanny shall sing  
 “your favourite song: you will be  
 “delighted with their several little  
 “improvements, with the dawn-  
 “ings of their infant reason.” Her  
 patience, tenderness, and mild vir-  
 tue were the only means of regain-  
 ing

ing the heart of this gay husband. On her friends often expressing their astonishment at her moderation under the greatest provocations, she calmly replied, "She pitied, and looked upon his failings as her own." Nor could the utmost sourness and ill-nature of his behaviour induce her to shew any indignation: instead of which, she frequently addressed an emphatic prayer to Heaven in his behalf: "Pity him, O thou Father of mercies; shew him the madness of his proceedings:—shew him the baseness of his pursuits:—O save him from this present infamy, and from everlasting per-

K 4                      "dition!"

“ dition !”—Heaven has rewarded the transcendent virtues of this admirable woman, by making her husband a convert to her *excellence*.

Never use *reserve* in disclosing your sentiments to your husbands ; on the contrary, unbosom your minds to them with the utmost confidence :—suspicion in this case would be criminal.—Consult them on all occasions ;—open all your griefs ;—ask their opinions, and be guided by their counsels :—but, however candid you may be in disclosing your *own* affairs, never reveal the secrets of a *friend* ; they are sacred *deposits*, which you have

no

no right to reveal. A married woman often believes she *must* and *ought* to communicate all she knows to her husband; but the secrets of a friend she is not obliged to divulge — and it would be dishonourable to disclose them. A husband may not consider the secret you entrust to him in the same important light you do; it may appear very *trifling* to *him*, and a mere subject of pleasantry; — neither will he feel himself under the same obligation of honour and secrecy. I have often heard a wife, with the greatest gravity and concern, disclose a secret of her friend to her husband, who has given her  
his

his word and honour he would keep it most inviolably ; but on its being imparted, not having the *same* idea of it as herself, has broke out into a laugh, exclaiming, “ Is “ this your mighty secret ! ” — and has enjoyed what *he* called a joke, by telling the whole affair to the very next person he met. This is provoking, but there is no remedy ; the wife, in this case, endeavours to palliate the discovery, by saying, “ it was *only* to my husband I revealed the affair ; ” but that is *no excuse*. Many men, who boast of their honour and honesty, do not always understand those delicacies of sentiment, which *are*,  
or

or *ought to be*, the chief characteristics of *our* sex. Miserable is that woman, who, if she possesses great *refinement*, marries a man without an equal share;—he will not so much as *understand* her sufferings; whilst she will soon be tired of insipidity and dullness.

From the attention my dear young friends shew to all who are so fortunate as to be under their roof, I know you will shew the utmost humanity for your servants, and make their dependant situation as comfortable as possible; but, ample as your fortunes are, and fashionable as it is not even to know the *name* of many a *dish* at  
your



your own table, by leaving every thing to the management of an head-servant; yet I am too well convinced of the good understandings of both my friends, not to know they will chuse to look into the management of every thing *themselves*; and for this reason—because the lower *servants* of a family, in general, never will be entirely directed nor governed by a *servant*; whom, if she is much attached to her mistress, they look on as a *spy* on their actions; consequently every method is taken by the inferior servants to *deceive* and *impose* on the *housekeeper*. No doubt but there are many very  
valuable

valuable women of the greatest honesty in that capacity; but still every Lady would do well to reserve the *chief* management of her family for her own inspection. It is in fact her chief province of shining. Nor can you be excused from this necessary employment by any extent of fortune; we all know, that *without* œconomy the greatest *wealth* will soon dwindle to nothing; but *with it*, a very moderate share of fortune may enable its possessors to live with ease and comfort.

As much of the happiness of common life depends on a well-regulated family of servants, it is no trifling

trifling matter of whom you compose that little useful community; the greatest regard and attention is to be paid to their morals and character. A set of disorderly servants is a much greater plague than it may be imagined; and where some are bad, they too often corrupt the rest.— Your family affairs— but more of this subject in my next— it is time to give you some respite, as well as myself: Adieu then! It is needless to say how much I am

Your's, &c.

LET-

## LETTER VIII.

THE SUBJECT OF OECONOMY CONTI-  
NUED—SEPARATE PURSES, &c. &c.

My amiable friends,

THE subject nearest my heart  
(your ease and welfare) will  
flow to my pen. Your family af-  
fairs *will* and *ought* to engross  
much of your time.

The old maxim, that *without*  
frugality none can be *rich*, and  
*with it* very few would be *poor*,  
can

can never be too much inculcated. Your prudence is such, that I know you will strictly attend to the article of regularity in expences, and never exceed, on any account, that part which more immediately falls under your share of management; be it much or little, the great affair is to keep *within it*. Every person who has been so imprudent to exceed their circumstances, must, in order to retrieve the bad management, resolutely avoid certain expences, which have been the most formidable articles. The placid satisfaction, the quiet slumbers of those people who inflexibly measure

sure

sure their expences, and confine their desires within the circle of their yearly revenue (whatever it is) is as impossible to be described, as the dreadful consequences and reflections must be which arise from a contrary conduct.

Many wives approve of the scheme of a yearly income set apart for their own private use: but surely all separate purses are *unnecessary*; for if a woman can give her person to a man, and depend on him for the happiness of her whole life, she may well rely on his honour for whatever her expences may be: there seems less of *generosity* than of *prudence*

in this measure. Undoubtedly, there should be no *reserve* of expences on either side, and where there is but *one heart*, one would imagine there should be but *one purse*.

One should express some degree of surprize, if, on two poor industrious people marrying, one of them was to reserve a separate share of their small gains apart from the other ; one should naturally imagine they were both equally entitled to the same common stock. Surely the same observation will hold good in higher life ; and perhaps this fashion of a considerable separate allowance,

may run many women of a gay dissipated turn into extravagance ; which without they had had it in their power to gratify, by not being *accountable* for their expences to their husbands, might never have entered their heads. But surely, to a woman of sentiment and generosity, who is greatly attached to her husband, a separate purse can be no more than a *nominal* advantage ; for what wife, who has the least tenderness or consideration for her husband's domestic affairs, could support the idea of *withholding* any sum from him ; or even knowing she had it in her power, without alleviating



to the utmost his *present* distress, or contributing to his *future* ease, by joyfully relinquishing every possible relief in her power for his advantage? A *separate* provision may be *prudent*; but does it not imply a small doubt of the husband's *generosity*?

Many women object to acquaint an husband with their common expences; but if he is reasonable, he will see the expence is *necessary*; and if it be *not* so, the wife is better without it. In short, it seems an absolute contradiction, to have *separate* interests, where we are to imagine the friendship is so tender and sacred. Many women may think

think I am preaching up sad doctrine on this head ; but their objections to it are easily answered, by asking, if *husband* and *wife* (as they are called) be *one*, or *not* ? if *not*, all *prudent caution* on this article is absolutely necessary ; but if the former, there can be no separate purses or separate interests.

Believe me your most affectionate friend, &c.

## L E T T E R IX.

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY  
CULTIVATING THE MINDS OF  
CHILDREN ; AND OF GIVING  
THEM THE EARLIEST IDEAS OF  
TRUTH AND BENEVOLENCE.

*Hotwells.*

HOW delightful are my sensations, in entering upon a subject equally important to me, and interesting ! I need not say, that subject is *your dear little ones*.—I have been amusing myself, in the  
painful

painful intervals of my long illness, with throwing together a few thoughts, which may possibly be of some small service in your first forming their tender minds, —I fear my heart on this occasion will be too much *softened*, and too *full*, to admit of much connexion, as the subject will be *your* children. —those children, which alas ! I fondly but vainly hoped to have lived to have cherished—to have instructed——

For a few moments I must lay down my pen, to indulge the tear that is insensibly stealing down my languid cheek, at the recollection of former scenes of tender-

ness.—So strongly is my heart impressed with the idea of your beloved children, that I imagine at this moment they are now surrounding me;—the little groupe are hanging round my knees as usual—I see their shining eyes—their blooming cheeks glowing with health:—I hear their *joyous* voice—the voice *itself* of chearful innocence—I see their smiles of infant sweetness.

Whilst each is trying, by its playful endeavours, to soothe my painful solitude—and each is striving by turns

“ ——— to climb my arms——  
“ And share the envied kiss”——

whilst

whilst again I am fondly *importuned* to tell their *favourite fairy tale*, which is eagerly attended to; the little wondering listening groupe still clinging nearer, in affright and pleasing astonishment.

Ah! too busy recollection, why dost thou cheat me with this *ideal* happiness! never more, alas! to be enjoyed!—Methinks I still feel the tender grasp of little hands fast locked in mine at parting—and still hear the *last adieu* pronounced from those *innocent* lips, which “*know not deceit.*”

How often has the sigh of pity heaved my anxious bosom, when I  
have,

have been fondly contemplating these dear children at their little sports and plays, blinded (as we all are) by false appearances and delusive ideas ; their innocent bosoms full of unsuspecting truth, and unbounded confidence ;—alive to the quickest sense of pity and tenderness ;— their little hearts beating in the warm pursuits of each other's happiness. — Often, alas ! with a sigh, have I exclaimed,

“ How soon will these tender amiable emotions of delight, this openness and simplicity of heart, this benevolence and candour, be exchanged, if not totally erased, (melancholy reflection !)

“ by

“ by low suspicion, distrust, de-  
 “ ceit, and ingratitude, the in-  
 “ evitable consequence of a com-  
 “ merce with the *world* !”

Dear babes ! accept this last effort of my trembling hand ;— accept this small tribute of affection : and O, might the ensuing hints be of the least service in your future lives, I die content : —at least you will sometimes read them, I trust, when the hand which wrote them is mouldering in the dust.

Ye guardian angels, who watch over unsuspecting simplicity, make these little innocents your choicest care ! — direct their erring steps, strengthen



strengthen their opening minds,  
and lead them to virtue here, and  
to happiness hereafter !

Believe me, my friends, that  
the rising and setting sun is the  
constant witness of my secret ad-  
dress for your children to the  
Eternal Source of all perfection,  
in the following words of a favou-  
rite author, Thomson.

“ Father of light, and life ! thou Good

“ Supreme !

“ O teach them what is *good* ! teach them

“ *Thyself* !

“ Save them from Folly, Vanity and Vice,

“ From every low pursuit ! And feed their

“ souls

“ With knowledge, conscious peace, and

“ virtue pure,

“ Sacred,

“ Sacred, substantial, never-fading bliss !”

It is certainly a very erroneous opinion to imagine (as many people do) that from the age of *two* years to *six*, in children, is quite an *indifferent* period, and to be filled up with *play* and *amusement* only.—A child of that age has commonly the most *unlimited* indulgence of all things ; and they are cunning enough to know, that if they *cry* their *request* is commonly granted :—because a foolish mother or servant says, “ Let  
 “ *him* have this request—what  
 “ does it *signify* to deny *such* a ba-  
 “ by, or mere child, what it wants ;

“ —a

“—a child of four years old,” &c.

But perhaps *that* early period is one of the most critical, the most important of their lives.

“Then infant reason grows apace, and

“ asks

“ For the kind hand of an assiduous care.”

Of what infinite advantage are the *first* good impressions! — O that *mothers* would, with the most anxious solicitude, watch over the opening minds of their little ones, instead of leaving them a prey to a careless mercenary chambermaid! — Can any object in nature merit more our compassion, than a little helpless creature, uninformed,

ed, ignorant of *what* or *who* it is ;  
 with a mind then spotless as new-  
 fallen snow, delicate as the un-  
 sullied sheet of fairest writing-  
 paper, consequently apt and ready  
 to take the least impression — and  
 where a *blot* is once imbibed, the  
*indelible mark* will remain to all  
 eternity.

Aristotle says, “ The prin-  
 “ ciples a child imbibes, and the  
 “ habits they contract in their  
 “ early years, are not matters of  
 “ small moment, but of the ut-  
 “ most consequence imaginable ;  
 “ they not only give a transient  
 “ or superficial tincture to their  
 “ first appearance in life ; but most  
 “ commonly

“commonly *stamp* the form of  
 “their whole future conduct, and  
 “even of their eternal state.”

Astonishing is the carelessness of parents in this particular—viz. of a total neglect of the *mind* of a child, till it arrives at eight or ten years.—Alas! the mischief is long done before that period; the little helpless being is long before that age taught *art, cunning, obstinacy, and deceit.*

There cannot surely be a more blameable, I might say *criminal* character, than that of a mother who neglects the improvement of the *first* dawnings of reason of her own children; but what a degree  
 of

of inhumanity is it, not only to neglect, but even to *check* a child for asking questions of the most important nature!—I have heard a child of five years old *corrected* for asking “What is a lye?—and “what is being charitable?”—questions of the *utmost* consequence to be most *minutely* explained. — The little ignorant *querist* has stood with a face of the most anxious curiosity; but, instead of being *informed*, has been sharply rebuked by its *gay* mother (perhaps dressing for a public place) with this answer, “Lord, “child, what foolish questions “you ask!—Go to play—and

VOL. I.                      M                      “don’t

" don't tease me with any more  
 " of such nonsense !" The poor  
 child, snubbed, disappointed, and  
 abashed, in thinking he has done  
 wrong, turns away in tears, and  
 is obliged for information, to any  
 sensible question he may be inclined  
 to ask, to one of the servants ;  
 who perhaps, tells him, " a lye is  
 " a joke," &c. &c. How is it  
 possible a child in such a situation  
 should know what is merely *right*  
 or *wrong* ? what is *truth* or *false-*  
*hood* ? and yet, perhaps, the next  
 hour, this very infant will be  
 whipped for *daring* to tell an *un-*  
*truth*. Equally cruel and pre-  
 posterous is this :—and yet no-  
 thing

thing can be more common, than to *correct* a child for what it does not *know* is a *fault*. There are *mothers* (I blush for the *credit* of my sex to write it) who know *not* if their children can spell their names, even at the advanced age of eight years;—and there are *fathers*, who, from their children being constantly shut up in a *nursery*, know not even their faces:—Alas! little do such parents know the pleasures of that delightful task,

———“ To rear the tender thought;  
 “ To teach the young idea how to shoot,  
 “ To pour the fresh instruction o’er the  
 “ mind,



“ To breathe th’ inspiring spirit, to im-  
 “ plant

“ The generous spirit in the glowing  
 “ breast.”

We see with what unwearied  
 assiduity a curious florist attends  
 his little nursery; he visits them  
 early and late; he guards them  
 from the spoils of insects; places  
 them in the most advantageous  
 situation; screens them from the  
 violence of the winds; marks the  
 springing buds, the lovely tints,  
 with the most unabated attention;  
 and never intermits his anxious  
 cares, till he sees them blown into  
 full perfection:—and shall (let me  
 ask a careless parent) a few paint-  
 ed

ed leaves, which to-day live only, and to-morrow fall to the ground, be attended with more zealous application than the exalted faculties of an immortal soul—and that the soul of their own child?

Many people think the first instructions given to children a tiresome task;—but surely to a good and patient mind it is attended with the highest satisfaction. Wonderfully pleasing are the questions of a sensible child, desirous of improvement; the innocent simplicity of that very early age (*uncorrupted* with the *world*) and their native love of

truth, joined with their artless questions, and often surprising remarks, render the task of instruction as agreeable as important. Great care should be taken not to charge or load their memory with precepts less proper to form their manners than to obscure their reason. As their questions are the most simple, the dictates of pure nature, so should the answers to them be equally simple and plain. The great point should be, whilst their tender minds are so susceptible of impression, to lead them imperceptibly to virtue, by such methods as may seem rather to *amuse* than to *instruct*; to excite  
 their

their attention with natural images, and pictures of such simple nature as occur to them every day, and that are the most natural and pleasing; and to enlarge their ideas with such stories, or short accounts of people, and things, as are calculated for giving them delight, and at the same time are capable of imprinting on their tender minds proper sentiments of religion, justice, and virtue.

One of the very first ideas that should be impressed on the infant-mind, should be that of tenderness and universal benevolence to animals, birds, and in short to even every degree of insect-exist-

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ence;

ence; this cannot be inculcated at too early an age: it may be made a *play* and amusement, by which means the child is imperceptibly led to compassion and benevolence. One cannot wonder at the cruelties practised by *school-boys* in general; as, in the very early part of their former *nurseries*, they are permitted, by their simple servants, to exercise every kind of wanton cruelty on some unfortunate dog, or whatever poor animal they can obtain. Birds of all kinds they look upon as a *prey*, on which they amuse themselves with every kind of wanton cruelty that can be invented: — sometimes they are dragged

dragged about in a string, or given to the merciless cat. They are even taught to laugh at the torments of these poor animals; who are certainly entitled, not only to our benevolence, but to our kindest care and protection. *Insects* of every kind (I have always observed) children are taught to *kill*; a custom as barbarous as absurd : whereas they ought to be made, to the *young mind*, a subject of the most amazing *power*, *wisdom*, and *benevolence* of the great Creator, who, out of his unbounded exuberant *goodness*, has diffused happiness into such infinite forms of existence. How wonderful are the displays of divine indulgence  
in

in these worlds of life ! because dead matter is incapable of delight, the gracious Creator has raised innumerable ranks of perceptive existence, such as are qualified to taste his bounty, and to enjoy a happiness suited each to its peculiar state ; and which we cannot *wantonly* destroy, without robbing, at least, a *being* of its existence. With the glorious design of *imparting happiness*, the regions of inferior nature are stocked with an infinite series of sensitive beings :—the waters teem with shoals of finny inhabitants—the dry land swarms with animals of every order—the firmament is occupied by multitudes of winged  
5 people :

people:—all this I am convinced  
a child of four years old is very  
capable of being informed;—and  
to be told, that not so much as a  
green leaf but lodges and feeds  
its innumerable tenants.

“ Scarce buds a leaf, or springs the lowest  
“ weed,

“ But little flocks upon its bosom feed:

“ No fruit our palate courts, or flower our  
“ smell,

“ But on its fragrant bosom nations dwell;

“ All form’d with proper faculties to  
“ share

“ The daily bounties of his common care.

“ The great Creator, from his heavenly  
“ throne,

“ Pleas’d on the wide expanded joy looks  
“ down,

“ And his eternal law is only *this*,

“ That *all* contribute to the general bliss.”

These



These sentiments should be daily inculcated—and the child assured, that the

———“ *poor beetle,*  
 “ Which he treads upon,  
 “ In corporal suffering feels as much  
 “ As when a giant dies.”

But alas ! instead of this method of *training* them to benevolence; a child, as soon as it can even speak or walk, is initiated in cruelty ; as if it were the distinguishing characteristic of *our* species, to exercise this kind of barbarity, in assuming a privilege of *killing* every insect within our reach. Some children are entertained by their maids with the amazing *sport* of killing *flies*. I have more than  
 once

once heard a mother endeavouring to quiet a froward child, by offering as a reward—"be quiet, and "you shall *kill a fly*."—The child so tutored naturally thinks it right to crush to death every insect within its reach; and, what is still more cruel, they are even taught to *pursue* those which are least capable of defending themselves, and who even shrink with fear from our rude touch. This very helpless part of the creation have undoubtedly a claim to our tenderest pity and protection. A child should be taught, that he cannot wantonly and wilfully destroy one of these amazing wonders of God's benevolence, without offending

offending *him*. The busy bee—the labouring ant—the harmless fly, are the most common objects—and, trifling as they may appear to the injudicious observer, they are capable of being made the *finest* lessons of instruction and morality, to even a child of five years old.—These simple objects, as the most *familiar*, might be made the most *important*.—The ingenious author† of the *Tatler* says, he never saw so lovely a sight, as “ a little boy, “ of four years, weeping over a “ beautiful butterfly his brother “ had just killed.” These amiable sights would be more frequent, if care was taken, at that early age, to

† Sir Richard Steele.

instil

instil compassion and benevolence into their susceptible bosoms as one of the first principles. The most common objects, which more immediately strike their notice at that childish part of life (in which they have commonly *more understanding* than is *imagined*) might be made of the utmost importance.—They are usually fond of birds, flowers, shells, &c. each of which beautiful productions of nature abounds with instruction.—Shew these little innocents, that they may learn improvement from the most insignificant bird that wanders in the air ; from the meanest herb that is scattered on the face of the earth :—not the smallest blade

blade of grass which trembles in the wind, but might afford a lesson of fine morality.—Endeavour to enlarge their minds, and to ennoble their conceptions : — so mix improvement with entertainment, that nothing may escape them without yielding some matter of instruction — and endeavour to deduce the sublimest truths from the most trivial occurrences.—— But I grow faint — and must lay down my weary pen. — Adieu — Adieu ! In my next I will pursue this to *me* delightful subject.



I am your's, &c.

END OF VOL. I.















